

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 9 ROME 12164

USDOCOCOSUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: THE CRAXI SOCIALIST PARTY

SUMMARY. THE SOCIALIST PARTY APPEARS TO BE ENTERING A NEW
STAGE OF ITS TROUBLED HISTROY. FOR YEARS IT HAS SUFFERED
FROM LEADERSHIP WHICH WAS WEAK AND INDECISIVE, A STRATEGY
WHICH WAVVERED BETWEEN ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND
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COLLABORATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, A FACTIONALISM
WHICH WAS COMPULSIVE AND DESTRUCTIVE, AN IMAGE WHICH WAS
UNFOCUSED AND A DECLINE IN PUBLIC RESPECT WHICH APPEARED
IRREVERSIBLE. NOW IT HAS TAKEN THE NECESSARY FIRST
STEP TOWARD RECOVERY; IT HAS OBTAINED AN UNDISPUTED
LEADER. FOLLOWING A STRATEGY DEVELOPED LATE LAST
YEAR, BETTINO CRAXI HAS MADE HIMSELF TE PARTY'S

STRONGEST SECRETARY SINCE PIETRO NENNI. IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS CRAXI AND HIS ALLY SIGNORILE HAVE MOVED BOLDLY AHEAD TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR DOMINANCE. THEY HAVE DEPRIVED THE MINORITY FACTIONS OF INFLUENCE. THEY HAVE INITIATED A RUTHLESS HOUSECLEANING OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATION. AND THEY HAVE LAUNCHED THEIR PARTY ON AN "AUTONOMOUS" POLITICAL COURSE. THEIR OBJECTIVE IS TO REGAIN VOTES LOST TO THE COMMUNISTS AND ASSURE THE SURVIVAL OF THE PARTY AS A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN ITALIAN POLITICS. THEIR STRATEGY FOR DOING SO, HOWEVER, MAY PROVE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND THEIR DESIRE FOR A NEW CENTER-LEFT COALITION IS PROBABLY UNATTAINABLE IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE PARTY'S NEED NOW IS TO GO BEYOND IMPROVING ITS IMAGE AND ORGANIZATION AND DEAL WITH ITS DEEPER PROBLEMS--ITS LACK OF PROGRAM, PROFILE AND CREDIBILITY. WHILE IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT CRAXI AND SIGNORILE ARE EQUAL TO THE TASK, THEY ARE UNQUESTIONABLY THE PARTY'S LAST BEST HOPE OF DOING SO. END SUMMARY.

1. THE STORY TELL NOW.

THE ITALIAN SOCIALIST PARTY HAS LONG BEEN THE PARTY EVERYONE HAS LOVED TO HATE. A PARTY WHICH SOUGHT TO DOMINATE THE LEFT, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE HATED IT. A PARTY WHICH HAS LAMENTABLY FAILED TO DOMINATE THE LEFT, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE ANTI-COMMUNISTS HAVE HATED IT. THOROUGHLY UNTRUSTWORTHY, NO OTHER PARTY COULD WORK WITH IT. BY INSTINCT LIBERAL AND IDEALISTIC, IN PRACTICE IT HAS BEEN GUIDED BY EXPEDIENCY AND THE LURE OF THE PERQUISITES OF POWER. IT HAS SPREAD CONFUSION BECAUSE ITS LEADERS SAID ONE THING, MEANT ANOTHER AND DID A THIRD. IT HAS DISAPPOINTED BECAUSE IT WAS NOT THE PARTY OTHERS WANTED IT TO BE AND OFTEN DEFIED THEIR PREDICTIONS. AND ABOVE ALL IT HAS EXASPERATED BECAUSE IT FAILED TO PROVIDE THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT ALTERNATIVE NECESSARY TO MAKE ITALY A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY. THE QUESTION CURRENTLY BEING ASKED IS WHETHER A PARTY WITH THIS BACKGROUND CAN FIND SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS UNDER A YOUNG, DYNAMIC LEADER. NOW READ ON.

A STAR IS BORN

2. THE ALLIANCE WHICH REPLACED DE MARTINO WITH CRAXI IN JULY 1976 LAST SCARCELY A YEAR. BY THE FALL OF 1977 TWO OF CRAXI'S PRINCIPAL ALLIES, MANCA AND MANCINI, HAD BECOME HIS ENEMIES. ABOUT THE SAME TIME MICHELE ACHILLI FORMED A SMALL "NEW LEFT" FACTION

DEDICATED TO AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF REMOVING THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FROM POWER. TOGETHER CRAXI'S OPPONENTS HAD A STRONG MAJORITY IN THE PARTY'S POLICY-MAKING ORGANS, THE DIRECTORATE AND THE SECRETARIAT. THEY NOT ONLY THREATEN CRAXI'S POSITION AS PARTY SECRETARY, THEY ALSO FORCED CRAXI TO ESPOUSE POSITIONS--MOST NOTABLY THE PROPOSAL FOR AN EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT WITH THE COMMUNISTS--WHICH HE PERSONALLY OPPOSED. AROUND THE TURN OF THE YEAR CRAXI FELT SO THREATENED HE EVEN CLAIMED THE COMMUNISTS AND THE KGB WERE OUT TO DESTROY HIM.

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USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

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3. "THE FOX KNOWS MANY THINGS BUT THE HEDGEHOG KNOWS ONE BIG THING," AS THE SAYING GOES. CRAXI MAY HAVE

FEW AND LIMITED IDEAS BUT HE IS WARY AND CALCULATING;
HE HAS PATIENCE AND TENACITY AND THROUGHOUT LAST
WINTER HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO HIS ONE BIG IDEA--
TAKING COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE PARTY. HE HAD A
SINGLE ALLY BUT THIS WAS A POWERFUL ONE--THE LOMBARDI-
SIGNORILE FACTION. ON THE FOUNDATION OF THIS
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ALLIANCE HE PLANNED A STRATEGY TO DEFEAT HIS ENEMIES,
SEIZE CONTROL OF THE PARTY ORGANS AND SET THE PARTY
ON A NEW COURSE. AT THE TIME--SIX MONTHS AGO--FEW
WOULD HAVE RATED HIS CHANCES OF SUCCESS VERY HIGH.

A FISTFUL OF DOLLARS

4. THE FIRST STEP WAS TAKEN IN JANUARY WHEN CRAXI
PERSUADED A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
MEMBERS TO CONVENE A PARTY CONGRESS A YEAR AHEAD OF
SCHEDULE. THEN HIS LIEUTENANTS, IN PARTICULAR
DE MICHELIS, ORGANIZED CRAXI-SIGNORILE MAJORITIES IN
MOST OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCES WHICH SELECTED THE
CONGRESS DELEGATES. AS A RESULT, CRAXI AND SIGNORILE
CONTROLLED ALMOST TWO-THIRDS OF THE DELEGATEDS WHEN THE
CONGRESS BEGAN. THE DELEGATES DUTIFULLY ELECTED
A CENTRAL COMMITTEE EQUALLY DOMINATED BY CRAXI AND
SIGNORILE SUPPORTERS AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN
TURN CO-OPTED A DIRECTORATE OF SIMILAR MAKEUP. CRAXI
AND SIGNORILE NOW HAD EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF THE PARTY.
THIS NOTABLE VICTORY WAS DUE NOT ONLY TO TACTICAL
CLEVERNESS AND ORGANIZING SKILL BUT ALSO--ACCORDING
TO AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNTS--TO THE LIBERAL USE OF
FUNDS TO BUY SUPPORT. THE FUNDS CAME NOT ONLY FROM
THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS BUT, PERHAPS
IN GREATER AMOUNTS, FROM CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC SOURCES.

5. HAVING ACHIEVED THEIR VICTORY, CRAXI AND SIGNORILE
DEMONSTRATED AN ENTIRELY UN-ITALIAN AGGRESSIVENESS
IN REAPING THE SPOILS. FIRST THEY SEIZED ALL THE
LEVERS OF POWER. THE SMALL SECRETARIATE WHICH GAVE EACH
FACTION REPRESENTATION AT THE TOP LEVEL OF THE PARTY
WAS LIQUIDATED. THE PARTY'S OFFICE DIRECTORS, WHO
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MANAGE THE PARTY'S DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES, WERE DISCHARGED
AND THE POSITIONS DISTRIBUTED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO
MEMBERS OF THE CRAXI AND SIGNORILE FACTIONS. THEN THEY

LAUNCHED THE PARTY ON A NEW POLITICAL COURSE.
ALREADY AT TURIN CRAXI HAD BEGUN TO REDIRECT THE PARTY
INTO A MIDDLE POSITION BETWEEN THE TWO BIG PARTIES
AND IN PRACTICE, THOUGH NOT FORMALLY, THE 41ST CONGRESS
ABANDONED THE "ALTERNATIVE OF THE LEFT" FOR "AUTONOMY"
AS THE PARTY'S STRATEGY. WITH AS EMPTY A CONCEPTUAL
VESSEL AS "AUTONOMY," CRAXI WAS AT LIBERTY TO FILL
IT WITH ANY MEANING HE DESIRED. WHAT HE DESIRED BE-
CAME INCREASINGLY APPARENT IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED
THE CONGRESS.

SWETT SMELL OF SUCCESS

6. AS IT TURNED OUT THE MORO CASE GAVE CRAXI HIS
FIRST OPENING. FOR FOUR WEEKS AFTER THE CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT WAS KIDNAPPED, CRAXI WAS ON
THE FOREFRONT OF THOSE APPEALING FOR NATIONAL UNITY
IN THE FACE OF RED BRIGADE TERRORISM; INDEED,
SOLIDARITY AMONG THE PARTIES OF THE MAJORITY WAS
ONE OF THE LEADING THEMES OF THE TURIN CONGRESS. ON
APRIL 20, HOWEVER, CRAXI BROKE RANK. IT WAS
AN AUDACIOUS MOVE AND THERE WERE MANY IN AND OUTSIDE
THE PARTY WHO EXPECTED--AND HOPED--THAT HE WOULD FALL
FLAT ON HIS FACE. IN FACT, CRAXI'S ATTEMPT TO MEDIATE
WITH THE RED BRIGADES FOR MORO'S RELEASE HAD TWO
RESULTS. FIRST, THE AUTONOMOUS COURSE PROVED ITS
APPEAL BY GAINING THE ENDORSEMENT OF SOME GROUPS FROM
THE FAR LEFT AND OF CATHOLICS OF THE CENTER. SECOND,
DE MARTINO, BECAUSE OF HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THE
KIDNAPPING OF HIS SON, WENT OVER TO CRAXI AND WITH THIS
THE DE MARTINO-MANCA FACTION WAS SPLIT WIDE OPEN.
IN THE DAYS BETWEEN MORO'S ASSASSINATION AND THE
FIRST ROUND OF ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS, MEMBERS OF BOTH THAT FACTION
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AND THE MANCINI FACTION DEFECTED
TO CRAXI IN SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS.

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7. THESE TRENDS REACHED A CULMINATION WITH THE
ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS OF MAY 14. INSTEAD OF MERELY
HOLDING ITS OWN, AS SOCIALIST LEADERS AT THEIR MOST
OPTIMISTIC HOPED, THE PARTY INCREASED ITS SUPPORT
BY 40 PERCENT OVER 1976. NOW IT SEEMED INESCAPABLE THAT
CRAXI WAS A WINNER AND AUTONOMY A WINNING STRATEGY.
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THE ELECTIONS WERE THE COUP DE GRACE FOR MANCA AND
MANCINI. WITH DE MARTINO GONE AND OTHER MEMBERS
ABANDONING THE FACTION, MANCA HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO
THROW IN HIS HAND. ON MAY 23 THE DE MARTINO-MANCA
FACTION WAS DISSOLVED AND MANCINI MADE PLAIN THAT
THOUGH HIS GROUP REMAINED IN EXISTENCE IT DID SO
ONLY A PRO FORMA BASIS. ACHILLI ALONE HELD OUT.
THE INTENSE AND DESTRUCTIVE FACTIONALISM THAT HAD FOR
DECADES LAMED THE SOCIALIST PARTY HAD COME TO AN END.
THERE WERE NO LONGER FIVE SOCIALIST PARTIES BUT ONE AND
ONE-TWENTIETH. WHEN THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MET ON
MAY 24-25, THE MEMBERS OF THE MANCA AND MANCINI

FACTIONS SWUNG BEHIND CRAXI AND ALL OF THE POLICIES WHICH HE ADVOCATED. THE LOVE FEAST IS NO DOUBT ONLY A TRUCE. BUT FOR THE TIME BEING AN UNPRECEDENTED UNITY PREVAILS.

8. IN A SENSE THE PRINCIPAL LOSER OF THIS REMARKABLE DEVELOPMENT WAS SIGNORILE. HE HAS BEEN SWAMPED. IN CRASS POWER TERMS CRAXI NO LONGER NEEDS HIM. MANCA MADE A BLUNT COMMENT ON THIS POINT IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE EMBASSY. HE SAID THAT HIS FACTION HAD BEEN DISSOLVED AS A SIGNAL TO CRAXI, TELLING THE PARTY SECRETARY IN EFFECT IF HE AND SIGNORILE EVER FOUND THEMSELVES IN FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENT OVER PARTY POLICY--MANCA SPECIFIED ENTRY INTO A NEW CENTER-LEFT COALITION AS AN EXAMPLE OF SUCH AN ISSUE--CRAXI WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO BREAK THE ALLIANCE WITH SIGNORILE AND BUILD A NEW PARTY COALITION BASED ON THE SUPPORT OF THE FORMER ADHERENTS OF THE MANCA AND MANCINI FACTIONS.

9. WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF SUCH A SPLIT BETWEEN THE
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TWO LEADERS? WILL THE UNITY OF PURPOSE IN HOLDING POWER EXTEND TO UNITY OF POLITICAL OBJECTIVES? ON THE ONE HAND THERE IS AN INHERENT TENSION IN THE RELATIONSHIP. THE LOMBARDI-SIGNORILE FACTION IS THE TRADITIONAL LEFT OF THE PARTY. SOME MEMBERS OF IT--MOST PROMINENTLY LOMBARDI--CONTINUE TO BE WEDDED TO A POLICY OF LEFT ALTERNATIVE, BY WHICH THEY MEAN THAT THEIR PARTY'S NATURAL ALLY IS THE COMMUNISTS, THEIR NATURAL ENEMY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE PARTY'S OBJECTIVE IS TO REMOVE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FROM POWER. THIS DIVERGENCE OF OUTLOOK COULD EVENTUALLY LEAD TO TROUBLE BOTH WITHIN THE FACTION AND BETWEEN CRAXI AND SIGNORILE, ESPECIALLY OVER THE ISSUE OF A NEW CENTER-LEFT COALITION. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TWO MEN GET ALONG WELL AND NO ONE BELIEVES SIGNORILE HAS ANY INTENTION OF CHALLENGING CRAXI FOR THE LEADERSHIP. MOREOVER, POWER IN THE PARTY HAS BEEN EVENLY SHARED, AND MANY OF THE KEY POSITIONS ARE IN THE HANDS OF MEMBERS OF THE LOMBARDI-SIGNORILE FACTION, SUCH AS DE MICHELIS, CICCHITTO AND ACQUAVIVA. THESE MEN ARE SOME OF THE PARTY'S BRIGHTEST AND MOST EFFECTIVE YOUNGER LEADERS. MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP ALSO HOLD ALL OF THE POSITIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR PARTY ORGANIZATION, ACQUAVIVA IN THE CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS, DE MICHELIS OVER THE PROVINCIAL AND REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND ALDO SPINI OVER THE CADRES. HENCE THE ALLIANCE COULD BE BROKEN ONLY AT THE EXPENSE OF RIPPING THE PARTY APART AT ITS

TOP LEVEL AND DESTROYING ITS MANAGEMENT APPARATUS.
IT CONSEQUENTLY APPEARS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT ANY DIFFERENCES
WILL BE CONTROLLED. INDEED, IN THE LONG TERM THE PO-
TENTIAL RISK IS LESS THAT OF A PARTY SPLIT THAN A
PARTY HOBBLING BY INTERNAL DIFFERENCES AND ONCE AGAIN
UNABLE TO PURSUE A CLEAR AND CONSISTENT POLITICAL
GOAL. IN SHORT, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE CRAXI AND
SIGNORILE WILL WORK CLOSELY AND HARMONIOUSLY TOGETHER.

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SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

IN COLD BLOOD

10. IF THE FIRST CONSEQUENCE OF CRAXI'S SUPREMACY WAS
THE END OF FACTIONALISM, THE SECOND WAS THE INITIATION
OF THE BIGGEST ORGANIZATIONAL HOUSECLEANING IN THE
PARTY'S POSTWAR HISTORY. FIRST, THE PARTY STATUTE

IS BEING REVISED TO REDUCE THE POWERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND INCREASE THOSE OF THE DIRECTORATE, A CONFIDENTIAL

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CHANGE WHICH WILL CENTRALIZE POWER IN THE HANDS OF CRAXI AND SIGNORILE. SECOND, THE TWO LEADERS HAVE MADE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO GIVE THE PARTY THE APPEARANCE OF YOUTHFUL DYNAMISM. THEY HAVE BROUGHT FORWARD A NUMBER OF 30 YEARS OLDS AND PUT THEM IN SOME OF THE MOST PARTY POSITIONS-GIANNI DE MICHELIS, IN CHARGE OF ORGANIZATION; FABRIZIO CICCHITTO, ECONOMIC MATTERS; CLAUDIO MARTELLI, CULTURE AND INFORMATION (RADIO AND TV); LUIGI COVATTA, HEAD OF THE PARTY'S STUDY CENTER; VALDO SPINI, OFFICE OF CADRES; AND PAOLO PEDRAZZOLI, OFFICE OF MIDDLE CLASSES. WITH CRAXI AND SIGNORILE THEMSELVES ALONG WITH MOST OF THE REMAINING LEADING OFFICIALS IN THEIR 40'S AND WITH THE SUPERANNUATION OF THE MAJOR POSTWAR LEADERS, DE MARTINO, MANCINI, NENNI AND LOMBARDI, THE PARTY NOW HAS THE YOUNGEST LEADERSHIP OF ANY ITALIAN PARTY APART FROM THE RADICALS.

11. FINALLY, THE PARTY IS NOW UNDERGOING THE MOST THOROUGH PERSONNEL SHAPEUP IN DECADES. LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS HAVE LONG BEEN IN BAD SHAPE, WITH INADEQUATE STAFF, INCOMPETENT PERSONNEL, INEFFICIENT MANAGEMENT AND DILAPIDATED OFFICES. CORRECTING THIS SITUATION IS DE MICHELIS' FIRST ORDER OF WORK, AND HE GIVES EVERY APPEARANCE OF BEING THE MAN TO DO THE JOB. ALREADY MANY OF THE OLD PROVINCIAL SECRETARIES HAVE BEEN WEEDED OUT AND REPLACED BY NEW AND YOUNG ONES. IN EMILIA-ROMAGNA, FOR INSTANCE, ALL OF THEM ARE UNDER 35. AT THE CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS ITSELF THE ENTIRE STAFF OF SOME 180 PERSONS WAS LAID OFF ON JUNE 12, WITH ONLY THOSE "ABSOLUTELY INDISPENSABLE FOR ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES" TO REMAIN TEMPORARILY ON THE JOB. A NEW STAFF OF BETWEEN 30 AND 50 IS TO

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BE FORMED BY THE END OF JULY. GENNARO ACQUAVIVA HAS BEEN MADE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF THE PARTY AND IS FURTHER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OVERALL INTERNAL OPERATIONS OF THE PARTY.

12. ALL OFFICE DIRECTORS HAVE BEEN CHANGED; IN ADDITION TO THOSE ALREADY MENTIONED: ADMINISTRATION AND

BUDGET, RINO FORMICA; FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GAETANO ARFE'; LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS, ALDO ANIASI, PROBLEMS OF THE MEZZOGIORNO, NICOLA CAPRIA; CREDIT AND INSURANCE, NERIO NESI; ENVIRONMENT, NEVO QUERCI; UNIONS, ROBERTO SPANO; STATE PROBLEMS, LELIO LAGORIO; SOCIAL REFORM, ANTONIO LANDOLFI; PROPAGANDA, FRANCESCO TEMPESTINN; WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, MARIA MAGNANI NOYA; LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, FRANCO BASSANINI. MOREOVER, PALO VITTORELLI HAS BEEN SACKED AS EDIOR OF AVANTI. CRAXI HIMSELF HAS ASSUMED THE EDITORSHIP, WITH THE DAILY OPERATIONS HEADED BY TWO VICE EDITORS, FRANCESCO GOZZANO AND UGO INTINI. BALZAMO, A MEMBER OF THE MANCINI FACTION IS TO BE REPLACED AS HEAD OF THE SOCIALIST GROUP IN THE CHAMBER AND MARIOTTI AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER.

13. WITH THESE CHANGES CRAXI AND SIGNORILE NOW HAVE AN INNER CIRCLE OF LOYAL AND COMPETENT OFFICIALS AND A REORGANIZED AND POTENTIALLY MORE EFFECTIVE PARTY STRUCTURE. THE COLD-BLOODED WAY THE PERSONNEL CHANGES WERE CARRIED OUT HAS CREATED BITTERNESS BUT THE PARTY WILL END UP WITH A STREAMLINED AND MORE EFFICIENT STAFF. MANCA AND MANCINI AND THEIR FOLLOWERS HAVE BEEN ALL BUT WIPED OUT. THEY WERE ALLOWED THREE--INSIGNIFICANT--OFFICE DIRECTOR POSITIONS AND THE TWO LEADERS THEMSELVES ARE OFTEN INCLUDED IN PARTY ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS THE GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCTING DISCUSSIONS WITH OTHER PARTIES ON THE PRESIDENCY. BUT ANY ROLE LEFT TO THEM IS AN ACT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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PHILANTHROPY ON THE PART OF CRAXI.

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USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

SHAPEUSNR FOR POLAD

THE FIFTEEN PERCENT SOLUTION

14. WHAT THE PARTY NEEDS AT THIS POINT, DE MICHELIS
TOLD THE EMBASSY NOT LONG AGO, IS TIME--TIME TO IM-
PLEMENT THESE CHANGES, TIME FOR THE NEW LEADERSHIP TO
TAKE HOLD, TIME TO EXPUNGE THE PARTY'S REPUTATION
FOR CORRUPTION AND TIME TO DEVELOP THE PARTY'S
NEWIMAGE AS A YOUNG AND VITAL ORGANIZATION. ABOVE
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ALL THE PARTY NEEDS TIME--AND WILL FROM NOW ON
DEVOTE ALL ITS EFFORTS--TO PREPARING FOR THE NEXT
NATIONAL ELECTION. INDEED A MAIN POINT OF THE
ORGANIZATIONAL SHAKEUP WAS TO CREATE AN APPARATUS
WHICH CAN ACHIEVE THE PARTY'S OVERRIDING GOAL--IN-
CREASING ITS VOTE TO 15 PERCENT. TO SOCIALISTS, 15
PERCENT IS THE SYMBOLIC FIGURE WHICH MEANS THEIR
PARTY IS BACK IN THE BIG TIME. IT IS THEIR DREAM TO
"REEQUILIBRATE THE STRENGTH OF THE TWO PARTIES OF THE
LEFT," AS THEY PHRASE IT, SO THEY WILL NO LONGER BE
THE LITTLE BROTHER OF EITHER THE COMMUNISTS OR THE
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. HOW DO THEY INTEND TO DO THIS?
SOCIALIST LEADERS WANT ABOVE ALL TO WIN BACK THE LARGE
BLOCK OF VOTERS WHICH THEY RECKON THEIR PARTY HAS
LOST OVER THE YEARS TO THE COMMUNISTS. THEY ALSO HOPE
TO PICK UP SOME SUPPORT FROM CATHOLICS OF THE CENTER
AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO THE LEFT OF THE COMMUNISTS.

THE FIRST TWO ROUNDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS HAVE ENCOURAGED THEM TO THINK THAT THEY ARE SUCCEEDING IN THEIR STRATEGY.

15. AS SOCIALIST LEADERS ANALYZE TH CURRENT SITUATION, ITALIAN POLITICS ARE ENTERING A NEW STAGE OF EVOLUTION. IN THEIR VIEW THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN IN INCREASING TROUBLE, TROUBLE DEMONSTRATED--AND NOW GREATLY AGGRAVATED--BY THEIR RECENT ELECTION LOSSES. IF THE PARTY MOVES FORWARD--TOWARD COMPLETE IDEOLOGICAL REVISION--IT WILL LOSE ON THE LEFT; IF IT MOVES BACK, IT WILL LOSE ON THE RIGHT. ALREADY IT IS BEGINNING TO LOSE THE MIDDLE CLASS PROTEST VOTE WHICH IT HAD BEEN PICKING UP THROUGH THE 1970'S. AT THE SAME TIME SOCIALISTS SEE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY AS EXHAUSTED TO THE POINT OF COMPLETE IMMOBILITY; IT
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CONTINUES TO ENJOY STRONG ELECTORAL SUPPORT BUT IS INTERNALLY TOO DECADENT TO USE THIS SUPPORT TO ADVANCE ANY POSITIVE GOAL. THE TWO BIG PARTIES HAVE BEEN TRYING TO COMPENSATE FOR THEIR WEAKNESS BY WORKING CLOSELY TOGETHER. INDEED THE PRESENT COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN THEM ,IN THEIR VIEW, AMOUNTS TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE IN ALL BUT NAME. THIS VERSION OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE IS, HOWEVER, INCAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. HENCE, IN TERMS OF BOTH PARTY POLITICS AND OF GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, THE COUNTRY HAS JUST ABOUT REACHED A DEAD END.

16. WITH THE CRUMBLING OF THE POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT ON WHICH THE TWO RECENT ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENTS HAVE RESTED, SO THEIR REASONING CONTINUES, ITALY IS APPROACHING THE POINT OF UNGOVERNABILITY. SOONER OR LATER A WAY OUT WILL HAVE TO FOUND, AND THE SOCIALISTS WILL OFFER A WAY OUT. WHAT IS THEIR POLITICAL DESIGN?

ON THE LOOSE

17. THE THIRD CONSEQUENCE OF CRAXI'S SUPREMACY IS THAT THE PARTY SECRETARY NOW HAS A FREE HAND TO PURSUE THE POLICY WHICH, PRIOR TO HIS VITORY AT TURIN, HE FAVORED BUT COULD NOT PERSUADE THE PARTY TO FOLLOW. THIS POLICY CAN BE SUMMED UP IN THE WORD "AUTONOMY." THE TERM SIGNIFIES AN INDEPENDENT COURSE OF ACTION, A THIRD WAY BETWEEN THE COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS,A POSITION WITHOUT REGARD FOR POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND ABOVE ALL A STATUS OF EQUALITY WITH THE TWO BIG PARTIES.

18. AUTONOMY IS BOTH A MEANS AND AN END. IT IS A TACTIC
IN THE SENSE THAT THE PARTY INTENDS TO ACT AS AN
INDEPENDENT AND CRITICAL ELEMENT IN ANY POLITICAL
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SITUATION. THIS ATTITUDE EXPLAINS NOT ONLY CRAXI'S
STAND ON THE MORO CASE BUT ALSO THE PARTY'S POSITION
ON THE TWO REFERENDA AND IN THE CURRENT PRESIDENTIAL
CONTEST. THIS ATTITUDE FURTHER EXPLAINS THE PARTY'S
INCREASINGLY HOSTILE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS
AND ITS EFFORT AT TIMES TO OVERTAKE THE COMMUNISTS
ON THE LEFT. JUST IN RECENT WEEKS THE TWO HAVE
CLASHED OVER ISSUES RANGING FROM FINANCIAL RESTRUCTURING
AND THE RENT LAW TO HEALTH REFORM AND WELFARE LEGISLA-
TION. AT THE MOMENT THEY ARE ALSO ENGAGED IN A BATTLE
OVER MANAGEMENT POSITIONS IN THE STATE RADIO AND
TELEVISION NETWORK. REFERRING TO THIS SITUATION, UGO
LA MALFA RECENTLY SAID TO L'ESPRESSO, "IF THE PSI
CONTINUES TO WANT TO ASSERT ITS AUTONOMY AT EVERY
OPPORTUNITY, THE CONFLICTS WILL INCREASE." NO DOUBT THEY WILL.
AS LUIGI COVATTA SAID TO THE EMBASSY THE OTHER DAY, "WE
ARE GOING TO CONDUCT NOT A WAR BUT A GUERILLA CAMPAIGN.
WE ARE GOING TO MAKE BOTH THE COMMUNISTS AND CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATS PAY FOR THEIR COLLABORATION. WE ARE ESPECIALLY
GOING TO CHALLENGE THE COMMUNISTS, TO FORCE THEM TO
CONFRONT THEIR INTERNAL DIFFERENCES." THE POINT
OF ALL THIS IS THAT BY PLAYING AN INDEPENDENT ROLE
THE SOCIALISTS HOPE TO CREATE A BROAD POPULAR APPEAL AND
AN ELECTORAL ATTRACTION, IN PARTICULAR AMONG WAVERING
COMMUNIST SUPPORTERS AS WELL AS THE ULTRA-LEFT AND
CATHOLICS OF THE CENTER. AUTONOMY IS THE RECIPE FOR
COLLECTING THE OPPOSITION VOTE IN A POLITICAL SYSTEM
WHICH HAS NO CLEAR OPPOSITION.

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19. THERE ARE TWO RISKS IN ALL THIS. THE FIRST
RELATES TO ONE OF THE PARTY'S GRAVEST PROBLEMS--ITS REPU-
TATION FOR UNRELIABILITY, EXPEDIENCY AND IRRESPONSIBILITY.
GOING IT ALONE IN THE MORO CASE, BASHING THE COMMUNISTS
OVER EVERY POSSIBLE ISSUE, CONDUCTING A GUERILLA CAMPAIGN
AND BEING RECALCITRANT IN PARLIAMENT WILL ATTRACT ATTENTION
AND MAY APPEAL TO SOME PROTEST VOTERS BUT IT WILL NOT
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DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PARTY CAN BE TRUSTED WITH THE SERIOUS
TASK OF GOVERNING THE COUNTRY. THE SECOND RISK IS THE
LIGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE FORMER IN ITS CONTEMPORARY
POLITICAL CONTEXT. THE FEAR AMONG GOVERNMENT LEADERS AND
BY THE OTHER PARTIES IS THAT THE SOCIALISTS MAY BEHAVE
SO RECKLESSLY THEY WILL BRING DOWN THE PRESENT GOVERNING
ARRANGEMENT. THEY THEMSELVES INSIST THEY HAVE NO WISH TO
DO SO. BUT THE PARTY'S BEHAVIOR WILL CAUSE CONTINUOUS
TENSION IN THE GOVERNMENT WAND WILL FURTHER DAMAGE THE
SOCIALISTS' ALREADY LOW STANDING WITH THE OTHER PARTIES
AND MUCH OF THE PUBLIC.

20. AUTONOMY IS ALSO AN OBJECTIVE--THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY AS AN INDEPENDENT POLITICAL FORCE ABLE
TO COOPERATE AS AN EQUAL PARTNER WITH EITHER THE RIGHT OR

THE LEFT. IN REALITY THE CHOICE IS THEORETICAL. TODAY THE INSIGNIFICANT ACHILLI FACTION ALONE ADVOCATES ALLIANCE WITH THE COMMUNISTS. THE ONLY INSIDER TO SPEAK OF IT AS A POSSIBLE OPTION IS LOMBARDI AND HE HAS GREAT PRESTIGE BUT LIMITED INFLUENCE. IN THE VIEW OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE AT A CROSSROADS. THEY MUST CHOOSE EITHER THE COMMUNISTS OR THE SOCIALISTS AS THEIR PARTNER. WHAT CRAXI AND SIGNORILE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS OPEN THE WAY TO THE LATTER CHOICE. THEY ARE SEEKING TO CULTIVATE THOSE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WHO DO NOT CONCUR WITH THEIR LEADERS' COOPERATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN THE HOPE OF DOING A DEAL WITH THEM. THE SORT OF DEAL THEY HAVE HAD IN MIND WOULD BE AN UNDERSTANDING OVER THE PRESIDENCY AND THE PRIME MINISTRY, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO HAVE THE FORMER AND THE SOCIALISTS THE LATTER. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM TO STRIKE THIS BARGAIN, AND RIGHT-WING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAVE SEEMED THE MOST PROMISING. AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF ANY

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COALITION WITH THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IS THAT THE SOCIALISTS MUST NOT APPEAR AS THE SUBORDINATE PARTNER. THIS CONCERN LIES BEHIND THE SOCIALIST DESIRE--MOST OBSERVERS WOULD SAY, FANTASY--FOR A SOCIALIST PRIME MINISTER.

21. THE FATAL WEAKNESS OF THIS APPROACH IS THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP IS NOT YET READY TO CONSIDER CHANGING THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENT. TO BREAK UP THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENT AND TO PUT THE COMMUNISTS INTO THE OPPOSITION IS NOT A RISK THEY WANT TO TAKE WITHOUT GREATER ASSURANCES OF A VIABLE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE. TO SOME, THE DC'S CURRENT DE FACTO COALITION WITH THE COMMUNISTS HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF PRESERVING CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC POWER AND OF GOVERNING THE COUNTRY WITH A MINIMUM OF DIFFICULTY. EVEN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WHO ARE MOST DISTURBED BY THE EXISTING COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNISTS AND WHO OPPOSE ANY FURTHER STEP TOWARD THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE DO NOT REGARD THE SOCIALIST PARTY AS HAVING YET REACHED THE STAGE WHERE IT WOULD BE A FEASIBLE COALITION PARTNER. "THE SOCIALISTS SIMPLY ARE NOT RELIABLE," IS THE VIRTUAL REFRAIN AMONG CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC DEPUTIES. IN SHORT, UNTIL THE SOCIALIST PARTY CAN DEMONSTRATE ITS COHERENCE, SOBRIETY AND RELIABILITY, IT WILL NOT OFFER AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION.

22. NOR IS IT CLEAR THAT THE SOCIALIST PARTY AS A WHOLE IS ANXIOUS TO GO BACK INTO A CENTER-LEFT COALITION. AT THE GRASS ROOTS, AMONG THE PARTY'S INTELLECTUALS AND ON THE PART OF LOMBARDI AND HIS COTERIE, THERE IS A RESIDUAL ANTIPATHY TO A POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH THEY FEEL IN

THE PAST HAD GRAVELY DAMAGED THEIR PARTY, MORALLY AND
MATERIALLY. WHAT CRAXI WOULD LIKE TO DO IDEALLY IS
THEREFORE HOSTAGE TO WHAT CRAXI CAN DO REALISTICALLY.
AND THE LATTER WILL DEPEND ESSENTIALLY ON TIMING AND

CIRCUMSTANCES.
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23. THERE IS IN ANY CASE AN OBVIOUS CONCEPTUAL DEFECT IN
THE PLAN FOR A NEW CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT. ONCE THE
SOCIALISTS ENTER THE GOVERNMENT, THE POLICY OF AUTONOMY
WILL COME TO AN END. THE PARTY WILL HAVE LEFT THE
OPPOSITION ROLE TO THE COMMUNISTS AND WILL HAVE COMPRO-
MISED ITS SEPARATE IDENTITY. THIS IS THE DILEMMA OF MANY
"THIRD" PARTIES--HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT AND AT
THE SAME TIME MAINTAIN AN OPPOSITON ROLE IN ORDER TO HAVE
AN IDENTITY AND GET DISSENTING VOTES. THIS IS THE SAME
DELEMMA WHICH CONFRONTS THE BRITISH LIBERALS AND THE GERMAN
FREE DEMOCRATS AND THE RISK IN THE ITALIAN CASE IS THE
SAME--A DRASTIC LOSS OF ELECTORAL SUPPORT. IN SUCH A
CASE THE SOCIALISTS WOULD FIND THEMSELVES BACK WHERE THEY
STARTED WHEN CRAXI TOOK OVER.

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24. THERE ARE TWO FURTHER ELEMENTS OF CRAXI'S LEADERSHIP THAT DESERVE MENTIONING. ONE IS HIS DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THEM. SHORT OF REUNIFICATION LICH BOTH PARTIES RECOGNIZE IS NOT POSSIBLE AT PRESENT. AT A RECENT MEETING OF HIS OWN CENTRAL COMMITTEE, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SECRETARY ROMITA STRONGLY ENDORSED THE POLICY OF THE "SOCIALIST AREA," MEANING CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
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TWO PARTIES AND HIS POSITION RECEIVED VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS SUPPORT. THIS COOPERATION IS ALREADY BECOMING VISIBLE IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROCEED BEYOND THAT. CRAXI WOULD WANT THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS TO JOIN THE SOCIALISTS IN ANY NEW CENTER-LEFT GOVERNMENT. FOR ITS PARTY THE LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP HAS A HIGH REGARD FOR CRAXI AND RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND THE LIBERALS HAVE ALSO IMPROVED MARKEDLY IN RECENT MONTHS. HOWEVER, RELATIONS WITH THE OTHER LAY PARTY, THE REPUBLICANS, HAVE DECCED TO THE POINT WHERE OE TWO ARE NOW EXTREMELY HOSTILE.

25. THE OTHER INNOVATION IS THE ATTENTION CRAXI INTENDS TO GIVE TO THE PARTY'S RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN SOCIALIST PARTIES. HE HAS PUT GAETANO ARFE' IN CHARGE OF THESE ACTIVITIES, WHICH WILL CONCENTRATE ON CONTACTS WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, IN PARTICULAR THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. THE SPD HAS AT THE SAME TIME APPOINTED A NEW, YOUNG HEAD OF THE ROME OFFICE OF THE PARTY'S FRIEDRICH-EBERT FOUNDATION, HOLGER QUIRING. QUIRING'S JOB IS TO MAINTAIN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE LEADERS OF BOTH THE SOCIALIST AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. CRAXI HAS A FURTHER INTEREST IN THESE CONTACTS. NEXT YEAR'S EUROPEAN ELECTIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO HIM AND HE WANTS TO KEEP HIS PARTY IN STE WITH THE OTHER SOCIALIST PARTIES OF THE COMMUNITY.

OBSURE OBJECT OF DESIRE

26. WERE THE SOCIALISTS TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT, IT IS NOT EASY TO PREDICT WHAT SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES THEY WOULD PURSUE. TO ASK A SOCIALIST OFFICIAL WHAT HIS PARTY STANDS FOR ONLY CAUSES EMBARRASSMENT. DURING THE PAST CONFIDENTIAL

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30 YEARS ITALIAN SOCIALISM HAS LOST IDEOLOGICAL MEANING TO ROUGHLY THE SAME EXTENT THAT IT HAS LOST VOTES. THE TWO GREAT SOCIAL REFORMS OF THE 1970'S, DIVORCE AND ABORTION, WERE SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIALISTS BUT INITIATED BY THE RADICALS. AND EVEN IN THE LATTER CASE, THE SOCIALISTS ABANDONED THE RADICALS AND WENT ALONG WITH THE OTHER PARTIES IN AMENDING THE PROPOSAL FOR FREE ABORTION FOR ALL. ECONOMIC JUSTICE, SECULARIZATION, CIVIL LIBERTIES AND MINORITY RIGHTS, ALL TRADITIONAL IDEALS OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISM, ENJOY LIP SERVICE BUT LITTLE REAL DEDICATION. THE SOCIALIST PARTY REMAINS MORE OPEN TO LIBERAL AND REFORMIST IDEALS THAN THE OTHER PARTIES. BUT IT IS NOT AN ACTIVE FORCE ON THEIR BEHALF. THERE IS NO SIGN THAT THE PRESENT LEADERS ARE DOING MUCH TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION.

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27. THE DIVERGENCE THAT SOMETIMES EXISTS BETWEEN CRAXI AND THE PARTY MEMBERSHIP OVER THE PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTTION WAS EXPOSED DURING THE RECENT REFERENDA CAMPAIGN WHEN THE PARTY SECRETARY ENDORSED THE POSITION OF THE OTHER PARTIES IN OPPOSING THE REFERENDA (ON PUBLIC FINANCING OF PARTIES AND PUBLIC ORDER LEGISLATION). CRAXI WAS CONFRONTED WITH A REVOLT NOT ONLY WITH THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, LED BY LOMBARDI AND MANCINI,BUT BY SOCIALIST
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INTELLECTUALS AND THE PARTY'S GRASS ROOTS.
CONSEQUENTLY, CRAXI HAD TO AGREED TO A FREE VOTE BY SOCIALISTS SINCE THE PARTY WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN REPUDIATED BY A LARGE PROPORTION OF ITS MEMBERS. THE ISSUE IS INSTRUCTIVE BECAUSE IT IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE CREDIBILITY GAP WHICH EXISTS BETWEEN THE LEADER-SHIP AND THE MEMBERSHIP OF A PARTY WHOSE TRADITION AND PHILOSOPHY ARE PROGRESSIVE BUT WHOSE LEADERS ARE PURSUING DIVERSE POLITICAL GOALS.

28. THE PARTY'S PROGRAM, DRAWN UP UNDER LUIGI COVATTA'S DIRECTION AND UNVEILED AT THE TURIN CONGRESS, DRAWS HEAVILY ON THE BAD GODESBERG PROGRAM AND WAS INTENDED TO MOVE ITALIAN SOCIALISM AWAY FROM MARXISM AND INTO THE WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC TRADITION. THE PROGRAM SET THREE MAIN OBJECTIVES: ENDING THE DIVISION BETWEEN RICH AND POOR; ENDING "THE POWER SYSTEM THAT IN THE COURSE OF THIRTY YEARS HAS GROWN UP AROUND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY: "AND CREATING "NEW SOCIAL AGGREGATIONS." THE ECONOMIC APPROACH IS OLD-FASHIONED LEFTIST. IT IS HOSTILE TO CAPITALISM AND ADVOCATES A BROAD SCHEME OF ECONOMIC PLANNING. IT CALLS FOR A "DIRECT ASSUMPTION BY THE STATE OF THE COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN FULL EMPLOYMENT" AND WOULD ESTABLISH A NATIONAL AGENCY FOR WORK AND

EMPLOYMENT TO DO SO. THE PROGRAM ALSO STRONG EMPHASIZES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEZZOGIORNO. IT THEN STATES: "THE OBJECTIVE OF FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPING THE MEZZOGIORNO IMPLIES A VAST RESTRUCTURING OF THE ITALIAN PRODUCTIVE APPARATUS. THIS PROCESS CANNOT AND MUST NOT BE ENTRUSTED TO THE 'SPONTANEOUS' MECHANISMS OF ECONOMIC FORCES BUT MUST BE PROMOTED AND GUIDED BY AN OVERALL PLAN." THE PROGRAM
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RECOMMENDS MERGING THE MINISTRIES OF BUDGET, TREASURY AND FINANCE INTO A MINISTRY OF NATIONAL ECONOMY AND WOULD COMBINE ALL OF THE MINISTERIAL ACTIVITIES, INSTITUTES AND FUNDS CONCERNING THE MEZZOGIORNO INTO A SINGLE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND SOUTHERN ITALY. THE PROGRAM ALSO RECOMMENDS A BROAD PLEA FOR AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION.

29. THE PROGRAM IS A WORTHY EFFORT BY AN INTELLIGENT GROUP OF YOUNG SOCIALISTS. BUT IF A PARTY IS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FORCE, IT MUST DO MORE THAN COLLECT THE PROTEST VOTE. IT MUST STAND FOR SOMETHING POSITIVE AND DEFINITE, AND THIS THE PROGRAM DOES NOT PROVIDE. IN FACT THE DOCUMENT HAS HAD LITTLE IMPACT AND POOR "REVIEWS." MANCINI JESTED THAT IT IS "AN OUTLINE MORE FOR THE CITY OF GOD THAN FOR A SOCIALIST PARADISE." ONE OF THE POLITICAL WEEKLIES SAW IT AS A PLAN TO TURN ITALY INTO ONE GRAND CLUB MEDITERRANEAN FROM THE ALPS TO THE IONIAN SEA.

BEYOND TOMORROW

30. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A GOOD MANY YEARS THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS ON THE MARCH. IT HAS A NEW IMAGE, IS COMING TO GRIPS WITH ITS ORGANIZATIONAL PROBLEMS, IS MORE UNITED THAN IN MANY YEARS AND IS HEADED BY FRESH AND VIGOROUS LEADERS. CRAXI IS BECOMING A SIGNIFICANT FIGURE ON THE POLITICAL SCENE. BUT IS CRAXI IN HIS OWN PERSON THE LONG-AWAITED MOVES TO LEAD THE SOCIALIST PARTY TO THE PROMISED LAND? CRAXI DOES NOT GIVE MOST OUTSIDERS THE IMPRESSION OF SOMEONE WHO WILL SET THE WORLD ON FIRE. HE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT IN THE SAME CLASS WITH BRANDT, KRESIY OR PALME. BUT HOW HE APPEARS TO HIS PARTY AND THE ITALIAN PEOPLE IS ANOTHER QUESTION. WHEN JAMES THURBER WAS ASKED WHY HE DREW WOMEN WHO WERE SO UNATTRACTIVE, HE REPLIED, "BUT THEY ARE ATTRACTIVE
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TO MY MEN." TO HIS OWN PARTY CRAXI HAS QUICKLY
BECOME A HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE GIFURE. EVEN SOCIALISTS
WHO ARE NOT PARTICULARLY FRIENDLY TO HIM GIVE CRAXI
CREDIT FOR BETTER POLITICAL INSTINCT THAN ANY OTHER PARTY
FIGURE OF RECENT TIMES. MOREOVER, THE QUALITIES HE
DISPLAYED IN RISING TO SUPREMACY IN THE PARTY--FORE-
SIGHT, PATIENCE, DETERMINATION AND COURAGE--SHOULD
HELP MAKE HIM A SUCCESSFUL PARTY LEADER. BUT IT
REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION WHETHER HE WILL BE ABLE TO
PROJECT THESE QUALITIES ACROSS THE TELEVISION SCREEN
IN A WAY WHICH WILL MAKE HIM A COMMANDING FIGURE ON
THE NATIONAL SCENE.

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31. THE REVIVAL OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY WILL BE A LONG
PROCESS. "THE PARTY IS IN REALITY ENGAGED IN A STRUGGLE
FOR SURVIVAL," IS THE WAY COVATTA PUT IT TO THE
EMBASSY RECENTLY. IT WOULD SUCCEED BUT IT WOULD
NEED A GOOD THREE YEARS. SOLVING ITS LEADERSHIP
PROBLEM, REORGANIZING ITSELF AND DEVELOPING A NEW
POLITICAL APPROACH HAVE INDEED MERELY LAID THE GROUNDWORK
FOR THE REALLY IMPORTANT CHANGES THAT MUST YET BE
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MADE IF THE PARTY IS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL
FORCE. NOW IT WILL BE UP TO CRAXI AND SIGNORILE
TO GIVE THE PARTY IDEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY, CLEAR OB-
JECTIVES, A CREDIBLE PROGRAM AND SOUND POLICIES AND
TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEIR PARTY HAS A ROLE TO PLAY
AND CAN DO SO RESPONSIBLY. IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO
CHARGE THEM WITH TOO MUCH. IT IS THE EVOLUTION OF
THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC AND COMMUNIST PARTIES
WHICH WILL LARGELY SET THE FUTURE OF ITALIAN POLITICAL
LIFE. NONETHELESS WHETHER THERE IS TO BE A THIRD
ELEMENT IN THE POLITICAL EQUATION--AN ALTERNATIVE
TO THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE OR APPROXIMATIONS
OF IT--THE SOCIALISTS THEMSELVES CAN DETERMINE.
BUT WHO CAN FORESEE WITH WHAT SUCCESS AND WITH WHAT
RESULT?GARDNER

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